



An employee publication of the
Texas Department of Criminal Justice

July/August 2014

Volume 21 Issue 6

Board Bulletin

The TDCJ Risk Management Program

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Every organization faces hazards, perils and losses that might have a negative impact on their operations. Successful organizational management minimizes

or eliminates these risks, and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's (TDCJ) Risk Management Program is one of the proactive measures put in place to help ensure successful management operations with the minimum risk exposure.

For TDCJ, risk exposure exists in all areas of the agency. Risk Management as an official administrative function began in 1984 with the creation of the agency's Safety Department, where prior plant maintenance officers performed safety-related activities. As the agency has grown and changed, the Safety Department evolved into the Risk Management Program and expanded its operations from fire and safety functions to a comprehensive loss prevention and control system. The Risk Management Program, now under the authority of the Administrative Review

and Risk Management (ARRM) Division, also has operational oversight for the TDCJ Occupational Safety and Health Program.

The objective of the TDCJ Risk Management Program is to conform to the highest risk management standards by conducting objective, honest, timely and ethical inquiries into all perils and risks which expose the agency to potential loss. The TDCJ Risk Management Program facilitates effective communication, cultivates understanding of the Risk Management Program mission, develops teamwork and promotes a spirit of cooperation within the agency.

Historically, some of the most significant risk losses the agency has faced are claims expenditures related to employee injuries and Worker's Compensation costs. Proactive measures and strategic development by the Risk Management Program and TDCJ leadership have led to an overall reduction in injuries and related expenses. In fact, Workers' Compensation costs paid out by the agency have been reduced from \$25,461,970 in 2002 to \$13,367,596 in 2013. This reduction is due primarily to a dedicated management effort and employee participation and

support for hazard identification training, safety and health training, and accident/injury investigations. Promoting a safe institutional environment for staff and offenders has a positive impact on the operations of the agency, but more important is the impact it has on the health and welfare of our employees and offender population.

Each year, ARRM prepares an annual report in an effort to capture costs associated with the agency's Risk Management Program. This report includes expenditures related to the risk management department, notaries, settlements and judgments. By monitoring and tracking these costs, as well as the agency's property losses and liability-related expenses, the Risk Management Program can assess potential risk exposures and help develop reduction strategies for consideration by the agency's leadership.

Another responsibility of the Risk Management Program is to serve as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator. In that capacity, the Risk Management department organizes agency efforts to comply with and carry out ADA-related responsibilities, to include the investigation of any com-

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plaint alleging noncompliance and providing for prompt and equitable resolution of such complaints. This is primarily carried out through the Offender Grievance process.

The agency is fortunate to have TDCJ's Risk Management Program with its dedicated staff working toward a successful team effort to minimize or eliminate potential risk exposure. ●